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ABSTRACT

In 1987, the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics interviewed 2,621 juveniles and young adults confined in 50 long-term, state-operated institutions in 26 states. More than one-quarter of the sample were over the age of 18. The results of the survey revealed that nearly 40% of the sample were being held for a violent offense. More than 60% used drugs regularly, and almost 40% were under the influence of drugs at the time of their offense. Less than one-third lived with both parents while they were growing up. More than 50% of all residents in these institutions reported that a family member had been incarcerated at some time in the past. Among all the juveniles and young adults held in institutions, over 90% were male and an estimated 53.1% were white. Almost 43% of the juveniles had been arrested more than five times, with over 20% of them having been arrested more than 10 times in the past. This report presents findings from the survey, including information on the criminal histories of those confined youth as well as a description of their family situations, drug and alcohol use, and peer group activities. Data are also presented on victims and use of weapons for those subjects committed to institutions for violent offenses.

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Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report

Survey of Youth in Custody, 1987

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Results from a nationally representative survey of juveniles and young adults in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions indicate that nearly 40% were being held for a violent offense. More than 60% used drugs regularly, and almost 40% were under the influence of drugs at the time of their offense. Less than a third lived with both parents while they were growing up. More than half of all residents in these institutions reported that a family member had been incarcerated at some time in the past.

The 1987 survey was based on personal interviews with a nationally representative sample of 2,821 residents from among the more than 25,000 individuals confined in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions. Interviews were carried out in 50 institutions in 26 States. Primarily as a result of the inclusion of California's Youth Authority facilities, more than a quarter of the sample was made up of young adults who are age 18 and older.¹ For the purposes of this report, this older population will be referred to as young adults, while those less than the age of 18 will be referred to as juveniles. All residents regardless of age will be referred to as youth. (See Methodology for additional information on sampling.)

¹The California Youth Authority receives juvenile court commitments of adjudicated delinquents (up to age 18) and young adult offenders up to age 21 (at the time of arrest) who have been convicted of felonies or misdemeanors. Young adults (up to age 25) who have been sentenced to the Department of Corrections may also be housed in Youth Authority institutions by court order.

Other findings from the survey include the following:

- An estimated 60.5% of the juveniles and young adults were between the ages of 15 and 17; 12.4% were age 14 or younger; and 27.2% were 18 years of age or older.
- Among all the juveniles and young adults held in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions, 93.1% were male. An estimated 53.1% were white; 41.1% were black; and 5.7% were American Indians, Asians, Alaska Natives, or Pacific Islanders. An estimated 18.9% were of Hispanic origin.
- About 70% of the juveniles and young adults did not live with both parents while they were growing up. More than half (54%) reported having primarily lived in a single-parent family.
- Among the juveniles in these facilities, 39.3% were held for a violent offense, 45.6% for a property offense, 5.6% for a drug offense, and 7.2% for a public-order offense. Just over 2% were confined for a juvenile status offense, such as truancy, running away, or incorrigibility.
- Almost 43% of the juveniles had been arrested more than 5 times, with over 20% of them having been arrested more than 10 times in the past.
- Approximately 4 of 5 juveniles (82.2%) reported previously having been on probation, and 3 of 5 (58.5%) reported having been committed to a correctional institution at least once in the past.

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September 1988

This Special Report presents the findings from BJS's first survey of youth confined in long-term, State-operated institutions. The survey was undertaken to complement existing Children in Custody censuses. It provides detailed information on the characteristics of those youth held primarily in secure settings within the juvenile justice system. This survey also serves as a companion to the survey of State prison inmates allowing us, for the first time, to compare confined populations in both the juvenile and adult justice systems.

The report offers new information on the criminal histories of those confined youth as well as a description of their family situations, drug and alcohol use, and peer group activities. For youth committed to these institutions for violent offenses, data were obtained on their victims and their use of weapons.

BJS is grateful to the numerous State officials and administrators who made this survey possible. Their cooperation was absolutely necessary to the successful implementation of this study. The survey is available in machine-readable form through the Criminal Justice Archive at the University of Michigan.

Steven R. Schlesinger
Director

• An estimated 97% of all juveniles and 98% of the young adults were found to have a current or prior violent offense or to have previously been on probation or sent to a correctional institution.

• The majority of the juveniles held for violent offenses reported that their victims were male (58.1%), white (61.6%), and under the age of 21 (54.2%). Over 40% of these victims were strangers to the offender, and approximately 12% were relatives.

• More than 80% of the residents reported the prior use of an illegal drug. Almost 40% of those who had previously used drugs began using drugs before the age of 12.

• Nearly half (47.6%) of the juveniles reported that they were under the influence of either drugs or alcohol at the time of their current offense.

Juvenile facilities

A census of juvenile detention, correctional, and shelter facilities and their residents is conducted every 2 years. Based on the 1985 census, there were 1,040 publicly operated juvenile detention, correctional, and shelter facilities in the United States, housing 51,402 residents. Approximately 19% of these public juvenile facilities were long-term, State-operated institutions, and they housed about 46% of all juveniles in public facilities.² These facilities have the highest percentage of residents committed by the courts and the lowest percentage confined for juvenile status offenses, such as truancy. Compared to juveniles in other types of publicly operated facilities—such as those operated by cities or counties or those in which juveniles are placed for short periods—the youth in long-term, State-operated institutions are generally the most serious offenders with longer criminal records. (See appendix table B for additional detail.)

Youth admitted to these institutions represent only a small percentage of all those handled annually by the juvenile justice system. In 1984 an estimated two million persons under age 18 were arrested. Of the estimated 1.3 million cases referred to the juvenile courts for delinquency or status offenses in 1984, 44% were formally processed. In about 28% of all cases the juvenile court formally concluded that the juvenile's behavior or custodial situation required court intervention, and about 4% of all

²See *Children in custody: Public juvenile facilities, 1985*, BJS Bulletin, NCJ-102457, October 1986.

Table 1. Characteristics of youth in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions, yearend 1987

Characteristics	Percent of youth			
	Total	11-14 years old	15-17 years old	18 years and older
Sex				
Male	93.1%	92.4%	93.2%	93.3%
Female	6.9	7.6	6.8	6.7
Race				
White	53.1%	48.4%	53.8%	54.6%
Black	41.1	48.7	40.3	40.5
Other*	5.7	6.9	5.9	4.8
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	18.9%	10.1%	15.5%	30.7%
Non-Hispanic	81.1	89.9	84.5	69.3
Education				
6th grade or less	12.7%	48.0%	9.5%	4.5%
7th or 8th grade	41.0	51.5	48.8	18.2
Some high school	43.4	2.5	41.1	67.7
High school graduate	2.9	0	.8	9.6
Median education	8 yrs	7 yrs	8 yrs	10 yrs
Number of youth	26,024	3,006	15,130	6,798

Note: Percents may not add to 100% due to rounding.

*Includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, and Pacific Islanders.

juveniles (almost 50,000 admissions) were sent to long-term, State-operated facilities.³

Characteristics of juveniles and young adults

Males were the overwhelming majority (93.1%) of juveniles and young adults held in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions (table 1). Whites were an estimated 53.1% of the population; blacks, 41.1%; and other races, 5.7%. Hispanics constituted nearly 19% of all residents in juvenile facilities. Among those age 18 or older, Hispanics accounted for almost 31%, primarily reflecting the influence of the California Youth Authority.

Juveniles and young adults in these institutions have lower levels of education than comparable youth in the general population. About 41.7% of all residents between the ages of 15 and 17 had completed more than 8 years of school; in 1986, 76% of the general population in this age group had completed more than 8 years of school. Among those age 18-24, about three-quarters (77.3%) had more than an eighth grade education, but fewer than a tenth (9.6%) graduated from high school. In the general population in 1986, 96% of those age 18-24 had gone beyond the eighth grade, and 79% were high school graduates.⁴

³See *Juvenile court statistics, 1984*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, August 1987.

⁴Unpublished data from the Current Population Survey, March Supplement, 1986.

Seven of every 10 juveniles and young adults primarily grew up in a household without both parents (table 2). Approximately 54.0% lived in single parent households—48.4% with their mothers and 5.6% with their fathers. In contrast to the incarcerated youth, 73.9% of the 62.8 million children in the Nation's resident population in 1986 were living with both parents.⁵

More than half of all juveniles and young adults in these juvenile institutions reported that a family member had served time in jail or prison. Nearly a fifth reported two or more family members had served time. A quarter of the residents reported that their fathers had been incarcerated at some time in the past.

About 30% of the juveniles and young adults in these institutions had a group of friends involved in criminal activities. These residents reported that their friends had committed crimes such as mugging, selling drugs, burglary, stealing cars, shoplifting, and selling stolen property. An estimated 62% of the residents were with others when they committed the offense for which they were currently incarcerated.

⁵Statistical abstract of the United States, 1988, U.S. Bureau of the Census, table 69, p. 58.

Current offenses

Of the juveniles incarcerated in long-term, State-operated juvenile facilities at yearend 1987, 39.3% were being held for a violent offense, 45.6% for a property offense, 5.6% for a drug offense, and 7.2% for a public-order offense (table 3). Just over 2% were confined for noncriminal juvenile offenses, such as truancy, running away from home, and incorrigible behavior.

Violent and drug offenses were more prevalent among the residents age 18 and older (52.3% and 11.3%, respectively) than among juveniles (39.3% and 5.6%, respectively). Assault was the most common violent offense among juveniles (16.3%); robbery was the most common violent offense among young adults (18.0%). About 1.8% of the juveniles had committed murder or nonnegligent manslaughter, compared to 7.1% of those age 18 or older.

Table 2. Family structure and peer group involvement of youth in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions, yearend 1987

	Percent of youth		
	Total	Less than 18 years old	18 years and older
Person(s) lived with while growing up	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Both parents	29.6	27.8	35.2
Mother only	46.4	50.2	43.7
Father only	5.6	5.9	4.9
Grandparents	10.0	10.3	9.1
Other relative	2.8	2.4	3.9
Friends	.2	.2	.3
Foster home	1.6	1.6	1.5
Agency or institution	.1	.2	.1
Other	1.4	1.3	1.4
Family member ever incarcerated*			
No	48.2%	47.2%	51.0%
Yes	51.8	52.8	49.0
Mother	8.8	9.4	7.3
Father	24.4	25.9	20.4
Brother or sister	25.1	23.7	28.8
Other relative	13.1	14.4	9.5
Had group of friends who were involved with crime			
No	68.7%	69.3%	67.1%
Yes	31.3	30.7	32.9
With others at time of current offense			
No	38.0%	37.2%	40.4%
Yes	62.0	62.8	59.6

*Percents add to more than 100% because more than one family member may have been incarcerated.

Table 3. Current offense of youth in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions, by sex, race, and age, yearend 1987

Age and current offense	Percent of youth						
	Total	Sex		Race		Ethnicity	
		Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
Less than 18 years old:							
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Violent offenses	39.3	39.8	32.0	32.9	47.0	40.6	39.1
Murder ^a	1.8	1.7	3.0	2.0	1.4	1.7	1.8
Negligent manslaughter	.6	.4	2.9	.6	.7	1.1	.5
Kidnaping	.3	.4	0	.2	.4	.4	.3
Rape	2.4	2.8	0	1.8	3.3	1.0	2.6
Other sexual assault	3.5	3.7	1.0	4.3	2.8	2.3	3.7
Robbery	13.1	13.3	10.8	10.8	15.9	15.8	12.6
Assault	16.3	16.5	14.7	11.9	21.4	16.8	16.3
Other violent	1.2	1.3	0	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.2
Property offenses	45.6	46.0	48.8	51.1	38.6	35.9	47.3
Burglary	23.8	24.2	18.6	27.2	19.4	20.1	24.4
Larceny/theft	7.3	7.4	5.3	8.0	6.3	3.1	8.0
Motor vehicle theft	7.8	7.8	8.2	8.2	7.1	7.3	7.9
Arson	1.8	1.9	.4	2.1	1.5	.9	1.9
Fraud	1.1	.6	7.4	1.7	.5	1.2	1.1
Stolen property	1.4	1.4	.9	1.1	1.7	.7	1.5
Other property	2.5	2.6	0	2.7	2.1	2.6	2.4
Drug offenses	5.6	5.4	7.7	4.2	7.4	14.3	4.1
Possession	2.9	2.6	6.9	2.7	3.5	6.3	2.3
Trafficking	2.5	2.6	.8	1.3	3.8	8.0	1.6
Other drug	.2	.2	0	.3	.1	0	.2
Public-order offenses	7.2	7.0	10.1	8.8	5.4	5.0	7.5
Weapons	1.9	1.9	1.2	1.6	2.2	1.0	2.0
Other public-order	5.3	5.1	8.9	7.2	3.2	4.0	5.5
Juvenile status offenses ^b	2.2	1.6	9.3	2.7	1.6	4.2	1.8
Other offenses	.2	.2	0	.3	0	0	.2
18 years and older:							
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Violent offenses	52.3	52.2	53.0	48.2	56.0	60.3	49.7
Murder ^a	7.1	7.2	...	8.1	5.6	9.3	6.1
Negligent manslaughter	2.2	2.3	...	2.5	1.8	2.2	2.2
Kidnaping	1.4	1.0	...	2.0	.4	2.3	1.0
Rape	5.1	5.4	...	4.4	5.8	5.4	4.9
Other sexual assault	1.6	1.9	...	2.5	.4	.9	2.0
Robbery	18.0	16.9	...	14.0	22.6	18.4	17.8
Assault	16.6	17.2	...	14.5	18.9	21.3	14.5
Other violent	.3	.4	...	.2	.5	.4	.3
Property offenses	29.0	30.1	14.5	34.2	22.6	21.8	32.3
Burglary	17.1	17.5	...	21.4	11.5	13.3	18.8
Larceny/theft	3.5	3.8	...	4.5	2.6	2.2	4.2
Motor vehicle theft	3.3	3.5	...	3.3	3.7	2.5	3.7
Arson	1.0	1.0	...	.9	.8	.8	1.1
Fraud	1.4	1.3	...	1.6	.9	1.9	1.2
Stolen property	2.3	2.5	...	2.2	2.7	1.2	2.8
Other property	.4	.4	...	.3	.2	0	.5
Drug offenses	11.3	10.5	23.2	8.8	14.9	11.1	11.4
Possession	5.6	5.4	...	5.2	6.1	6.1	5.5
Trafficking	5.4	4.8	...	3.7	8.1	5.0	5.8
Other drug	.3	.3	...	0	.7	0	.4
Public-order offenses	6.8	6.6	9.3	8.4	5.5	6.4	7.0
Weapons	2.5	2.2	...	2.2	3.0	2.7	2.3
Other public-order	4.3	4.4	...	6.1	2.4	3.7	4.7
Juvenile status offenses ^b	.3	.3	0	0	.8	0	.5
Other offenses	.3	.3	0	.4	.2	.4	.2

Note: Percents may not add to 100% due to rounding.
...Too few cases to provide reliable estimate.

^aIncludes nonnegligent manslaughter.
^bIncludes noncriminal juvenile offenses, such as truancy, running away, and incorrigible behavior.

Offense distributions also differed depending on the sex and race of the residents in these facilities. Among juveniles, males had a higher percentage incarcerated for a violent offense than females, with the exception of murder and negligent manslaughter. Higher percentages of females than of males, however, had been committed for an auto theft, fraud, drug possession, or a public-order offense other than a weapons violation. Burglary was the most prevalent offense among juveniles, regardless of their sex.

Black residents of either age group were more likely than whites to have been committed to the institutions for a violent or drug offense. Among juveniles, blacks were most likely to have been incarcerated for an assault (21.4%), and whites for a burglary (27.2%). Among young adults, blacks were most likely to have been confined for robbery (22.6%), and whites for burglary (21.4%). Hispanic juveniles were more likely than other residents to have been confined for a drug offense (14.3%), particularly drug trafficking.

Criminal histories

An important characteristic of criminal records is whether the juvenile has any history of violence. Based on the survey responses, 42.5% of juveniles in long-term, State-operated facilities had not previously been found by a court to have committed a violent offense (table 4).⁶ Correspondingly, 57.5% had been violent either on their current offense or in the past. Among this latter group are (1) those with a violent current offense only (24.8%), (2) those with prior violent offenses only (16.7%), and (3) those with both a current and prior violent offense (15.9%).

Nearly half of the ever violent offenders had been arrested six or more times; more than a third were sentenced to probation two or more times; and almost three-fifths had been previously sent to a correctional facility. Juveniles who had only a current violent offense had a less extensive

⁶Because of the lack of fingerprint identification for most juvenile offenders, self-report data are a significant source of information on the criminal histories of juveniles.

history of arrest than other offenders. For nearly a quarter of these, their first arrest led to their current confinement. Juveniles with a prior violent offense had the longest criminal histories of any offenders.

Among the juveniles held in long-term, State-operated institutions, almost 43% had been arrested more than 5 times, with over 20% of them having been arrested more than 10 times in the past.

The criminal histories may be further classified according to whether the juvenile reported having been previously sentenced to probation or incarceration. Most of the residents under age 18 had been on probation at least once in the past (82.2%). More than a third had been on probation two or more times. For approximately 42% of the juveniles this was their first time in a juvenile correctional facility. About 26% had one prior admission, and about 32% had two or more prior admissions to a correctional facility.

Table 4. Criminal history of juveniles in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions, by type of offender, yearend 1987

	Type of offender					
Criminal history	Total	Non-violent ^a	Ever violent	Current violent only	Prior violent only	Current and prior violent
Number in juvenile institutions	18,077 ^b	7,691	10,386	4,492	3,024	2,870
Percent in juvenile institutions	100%	42.5%	57.5%	24.8%	16.7%	15.9%
Number of times ever arrested						
1	14.8%	17.0%	13.2%	24.5%	4.9%	4.5%
2	13.3	14.9	12.1	16.3	6.2	11.6
3-5	29.4	32.9	26.8	29.6	25.3	24.2
6-10	21.1	18.5	22.9	16.2	26.9	29.2
11 or more	21.5	16.7	24.9	13.4	36.6	30.5
Number of times ever on probation						
0	17.8%	15.0%	19.9%	36.7%	5.7%	8.7%
1	46.6	50.2	43.9	40.0	43.9	50.0
2	19.7	20.5	19.1	13.8	25.0	21.0
3-5	13.3	12.3	14.1	8.5	19.5	17.0
6-10	2.0	1.8	2.3	.4	4.6	2.7
11 or more	.6	.5	.7	.5	1.2	.5
Number of prior admissions to correctional facilities						
0	41.5%	42.0%	41.1%	59.3%	20.1%	34.7%
1	26.2	29.2	24.0	21.7	29.4	21.9
2	12.1	14.0	10.7	7.8	12.7	13.2
3-5	12.1	10.2	13.6	7.3	17.8	19.1
6-10	5.3	3.2	6.8	2.6	13.4	8.5
11 or more	2.8	1.5	3.7	1.3	6.6	4.5

Note: Percents may not add to 100% due to rounding.

^aCurrent and prior offenses were nonviolent. Prior offenses include prior terms of probation or incarceration.

^bThe number of juveniles differs from that in table 1 because of missing data.

Note: Percents may not add to 100% due to rounding.

^aCurrent and prior offenses were nonviolent. Prior offenses include prior terms of probation or incarceration.

^bThe number of juveniles differs from that in table 1 because of missing data.

Table 5. Age and time served by juveniles in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions, by type of offender, yearend 1987

	Type of offender					
	Total	Non-violent*	Ever violent	Current violent only	Prior violent only	Current and prior violent
Mean age (years)	15.7	15.6	15.7	15.7	15.7	15.7
Mean age at first arrest (years)	12.8	13.2	12.6	13.3	12.0	12.2
Mean months served in the current institution	5.9	5.0	6.6	7.2	4.9	7.5
Mean months served in all correctional institutions	15.7	12.7	17.9	13.0	22.5	20.6
Percent of life spent in correctional institutions	8.3%	6.8%	9.5%	6.9%	11.9%	10.9%

*Current and prior offenses were nonviolent. Prior offenses include prior terms of probation or incarceration.

Table 6. Prior offenses of juveniles in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions, by most serious current offense, yearend 1987

Prior offense ^a	Percent of juveniles whose most serious current offense was:				
	Total	Violent	Property	Drugs	Public-order
Violent offenses	32.7%	37.7%	27.8%	35.4%	36.1%
Murder ^b	2.0	2.3	2.0	1.6	1.6
Rape	2.5	3.5	1.0	0	4.1
Robbery	7.7	10.7	5.5	10.8	4.2
Assault	27.9	31.5	24.9	29.3	31.6
Property offenses	69.6%	57.7%	82.6%	57.4%	70.6%
Burglary	35.3	23.3	49.0	21.2	30.7
Larceny/theft	39.2	31.9	47.7	34.1	37.9
Motor vehicle theft	27.4	22.3	33.7	17.0	26.1
Arson	4.9	4.4	5.4	3.8	6.1
Fraud	5.2	3.6	6.6	6.3	5.8
Stolen property	10.8	8.2	12.4	14.1	13.2
Other property	30.5	26.2	38.2	21.3	21.1
Drug offenses	22.1%	19.0%	19.8%	60.8%	26.5%
Possession	17.4	15.4	16.1	40.9	20.4
Trafficking	11.1	9.4	8.5	47.5	11.1
Public-order offenses	16.0%	15.8%	16.3%	14.2%	18.4%
Juvenile status offenses^c	38.6%	33.4%	42.1%	27.6%	49.4%
No prior offenses	16.6%	25.9%	9.4%	16.4%	11.1%

Note: Because of the small number of reported cases, prior offense categories about which respondents were not directly questioned were excluded.
^aIncludes previous terms of probation or incarceration.

^bIncludes nonnegligent manslaughter.
^cIncludes noncriminal juvenile offenses, such as truancy, running away, and incorrigible behavior.

Table 7. Use of a weapon by juveniles held for violent offenses, in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions, yearend 1987

Weapon use	Percent of juveniles with a current violent offense					
	All violent	Homicide ^a	Sexual assault ^b	Robbery	Assault	Other violent
Did not use a weapon	59.2%	22.3%	94.7%	56.0%	56.1%	71.9%
Used a weapon	40.9%	77.8%	5.3%	44.0%	43.9%	28.1%
Gun	19.7	56.9	1.5	23.7	15.4	13.0
Knife	10.1	17.8	2.6	11.2	9.9	9.5
Other ^c	11.1	3.1	1.2	9.1	18.6	5.6

Note: Percents may not add to 100% due to rounding.

^aIncludes murder and all forms of manslaughter.

^bIncludes rape and other sexual assaults.

^cIncludes weapons such as axes, ice picks, scissors, clubs, baseball bats, ropes, vehicles, and objects used for strangulation and suffocation.

The average age of juveniles in these facilities was 15.7 years (table 5). Their average age at first arrest was 12.8 years. They had served an average of 5.9 months in the current institution and a total of 15.7 months in all correctional institutions for their current and prior confinements—an average of 8.3% of their lives.

Violent juveniles overall had spent more time in their current institution (an average of 6.6 months) and a greater percent of their lives (9.5%) in correctional institutions than those without any history of violence. Offenders with both a current and prior violent offense and those currently nonviolent offenders with a history of violence spent an average of more than 20 months in correctional institutions.

Regardless of the type of crime for which the juveniles were currently held, nearly a third reported having been previously sentenced to probation or incarceration for a violent offense, more than two-thirds for a property offense, nearly a quarter for a drug offense, and a sixth for a public-order offense (table 6). About a sixth of the juveniles had no prior offense. Though juveniles currently serving time for a property offense were somewhat less likely than current violent offenders to have a violent record (27.8% vs. 37.7%, respectively), they were more likely to have a property offense in their past (82.6% vs. 57.7%). More than 60% of those serving time for drug offenses had previously been on probation or incarcerated for a drug offense. Larceny was the most common prior offense among juvenile residents (39.2%), followed by burglary (35.3%), other property offenses, primarily destruction of property, (30.5%), assault (27.9%), and motor vehicle theft (27.4%).

Weapon use

Of the juveniles held for a violent crime, nearly 41% used a weapon in the commission of their crime (table 7). Whether or not a weapon was used varied by the type of crime. A weapon was used in approximately 78% of homicides, 44.0% of robberies and assaults, and 5.3% of sexual assaults. The most frequently mentioned weapon was a gun, which was used in 19.7% of the violent crimes, 56.9% of all homicides, and 23.7% of all robberies committed by the juvenile offenders.

Victims of violent offenses

The majority of violent juvenile crimes were committed against males (58.1%), whites (61.6%), and persons younger than 21 (54.2%) (table 8). About 42% of the juveniles reported their victims were strangers, while approximately 38% knew their victims well. Nearly 1 of 8 juvenile offenders reported that the victims were relatives. Approximately a third of the violent offenders reported there was more than one victim.

The characteristics of victims differed by the type of offense. More than 77% of the juveniles held for sexual assault reported that their victims were female, while those held for other violent offenses reported mostly male victims. Sexual assault victims were the youngest: 46.1% were less than 12 years of age. About half of homicide, robbery, and other violent crime victims were 21 years of age or older.

Victims of homicide, sexual assault, and assault were mostly known to the juveniles; however, robbery victims were mostly strangers (62.8%). More than 34% of the homicide victims were well known to the juvenile offenders; 19.4% were relatives.

Table 8. Characteristics of the victims of juveniles held for violent crimes in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions, yearend 1987

Victim characteristics	Percent of juveniles with a current violent offense					
	All violent	Homicide ^a	Sexual assault ^b	Robbery	Assault	Other violent
Sex						
Male	58.1%	73.4%	14.7%	50.9%	77.1%	52.2%
Female	27.8	16.4	77.7	25.6	16.1	26.1
Both ^c	14.1	10.2	7.7	23.5	6.8	21.7
Race						
White	61.6%	57.3%	62.2%	68.3%	54.6%	69.1%
Black	24.8	31.9	31.4	13.9	33.9	11.8
Other	9.7	9.4	5.1	13.0	8.1	8.3
Mixed ^c	3.9	1.4	1.3	4.7	3.4	10.8
Age^d						
Less than 12 years	11.3%	9.2%	46.1%	5.7%	3.8%	24.2%
12-14	9.9	1.4	18.0	6.0	11.8	15.3
15-17	25.8	18.9	24.8	18.4	32.1	6.3
18-20	9.2	20.6	4.3	7.4	10.8	7.4
21-29	17.2	16.2	1.7	23.5	16.2	18.9
30 and older	28.5	33.6	5.1	39.1	25.2	27.8
Relationship to offender^e						
Well known	37.7%	34.3%	66.4%	22.5%	41.8%	57.4%
Relative	12.1	19.4	30.0	4.1	10.3	31.7
Nonrelative	25.6	14.9	36.4	18.4	31.5	25.7
Casual acquaintance	11.2	12.7	18.7	5.7	13.8	13.7
Known by sight only	9.4	9.7	1.9	8.9	13.6	1.2
Stranger	41.7	43.3	13.0	62.8	30.9	27.6
Offense involved multiple victims	30.8%	22.2%	16.1%	38.8%	27.9%	37.4%

Note: Percents may not add to 100% due to rounding.

^aIncludes murder and all forms of manslaughter.

^bIncludes rape and other sexual assaults.

^cFor cases with multiple victims.

^dAge of youngest victim for cases with multiple victims.

^eClosest relationship for cases with multiple victims.

Table 9. Alcohol consumption in the year before the current offense by youth in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions, yearend 1987

Alcohol consumption in year before current offense	Percent of youth		
	Total	Less than 18 years old	18 years and older
Drank some alcohol	76.6%	76.2%	77.7%
Drank regularly ^a	57.1	55.4	61.7
Got drunk at least once	66.0	65.4	67.6
Was under the influence at the time of the current offense	31.9	31.9	31.7

^aOne or more times per week in the year before admission.

Table 10. Use of illegal drugs by youth in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions, yearend 1987

Type of drug	Percent of youth								
	Total			Less than 18 years old			18 years and older		
	Ever used drugs	Used regularly ^a	Under influence at time of offense	Ever used drugs	Used regularly	Under influence at time of offense	Ever used drugs	Used regularly	Under influence at time of offense
Any drug	82.7%	63.1%	39.4%	80.6%	59.7%	39.1%	88.2%	72.3%	40.3%
Marijuana/hashish	81.2%	59.0%	30.0%	79.4%	56.6%	31.7%	85.9%	65.4%	25.4%
Cocaine	46.1	21.5	12.8	42.6	19.6	12.9	55.3	26.7	12.6
Amphetamines	36.3	15.5	6.0	37.8	15.6	6.4	32.5	15.2	4.9
LSD	28.9	11.9	6.5	26.7	11.5	7.3	34.7	13.2	4.2
Barbiturates	27.3	8.9	2.7	28.4	9.3	2.8	24.4	7.9	2.4
PCP	22.6	8.9	4.9	18.7	6.4	3.4	33.0	15.5	9.0
Quaaludes	14.6	3.0	.7	14.9	3.1	.9	13.7	2.7	.3
Heroin	13.0	5.2	3.4	11.9	4.5	2.9	16.0	7.0	4.7

Note: Percents do not add to total using any drug because of multiple drug use.

^aUsed once a week or more for at least a month.

Drug and alcohol use

Over 75% of the juveniles and young adults drank alcohol in the year prior to their current offense, while 57.1% drank regularly (table 9). Nearly 83% reported use of an illegal drug in the past, and 63.1% had used an illegal drug on a regular basis in the past (table 10). Marijuana, cocaine, and amphetamines were the most commonly mentioned drugs.

Over 80% of the residents had used marijuana at some time in the past, while 46.1% had used cocaine, 36.3% amphetamines, 28.9% LSD, 22.6% PCP, and 13.0% heroin. A survey of high school seniors conducted in 1986 by the National Institute on Drug Abuse indicated that 51% had used marijuana at some time in the past, while 17% had used cocaine, 23% stimulants, 7% LSD, 5% PCP, and 1% heroin.

A major drug--cocaine, heroin, LSD, or PCP--had been used regularly at some time in the past by 31.4% of the juveniles and young adults. Cocaine was reported as having been used regularly by 21.5% of the residents, LSD by 11.9%, PCP by 8.9%, and heroin by 5.2%. More of the young adults used a major drug on a regular basis (41.9%) than did juveniles (table 11). A larger percentage of young adults reported regular use of cocaine and PCP than had their younger counterparts.

About 33.5% of the juveniles and young adults began using drugs between the ages of 12 and 13; 23.3% first used drugs between the ages of 14 and 15; and 19.1% used drugs for the first time when they were less than 10 years of age (table 12). As with first use, the first regular use (once a week or more for at least a month) occurred most frequently between the ages of 12 and 13 (34.9%). The first use of a major drug occurred later than the first use of any drug, most frequently between the ages of 14 and 15 (40.8%). The first regular use of a major drug occurred most frequently during the same period of time.

⁷ See *Monitoring the future*, NIDA Capsules, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, March 1987.

Table 11. History of illegal drug use by youth in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions, yearend 1987

Type of drug use	Total	Percent of youth	
		Less than 18 years old	18 years and older
Ever used any drug on a regular basis ^a	63.1%	59.7%	72.3%
Ever used a major drug on a regular basis ^b	31.4	27.5	41.9
Used any drug in the month before the current offense	58.7	57.5	61.8
Used a major drug in the month before the current offense	30.8	28.5	37.0
Under the influence of drugs at time of the current offense	39.4	39.1	40.3

^aUsed once a week or more for at least a month.

^bMajor drugs include heroin, cocaine, LSD, and PCP.

Table 12. Age at onset of drug use by youth in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions, yearend 1987

Onset of drug use	Percent of youth					
	Total		Less than 18 years old		18 years and older	
	Any drug use	Major drug use ^a	Any drug use	Major drug use	Any drug use	Major drug use
Age at first use						
Less than 10 years	19.1%	4.4%	19.7%	5.1%	17.5%	3.0%
10-11	18.5	8.1	19.2	8.8	16.9	6.7
12-13	33.5	29.0	33.9	33.4	32.6	19.9
14-15	23.3	40.8	23.8	43.5	22.1	35.4
16-17	5.1	15.6	3.4	9.2	9.1	28.8
18 and older	.5	2.1			1.8	6.3
Median age	12 yrs	14 yrs	12 yrs	14 yrs	13 yrs	15 yrs
Age at first regular use						
Less than 10 years	10.9%	2.1%	10.5%	2.1%	11.8%	2.1%
10-11	16.7	7.2	17.8	8.3	14.1	5.4
12-13	34.9	24.3	37.4	28.9	29.5	16.5
14-15	30.3	44.9	30.4	48.9	30.1	37.8
16-17	6.7	17.7	3.8	11.8	13.1	27.9
18 and older	.4	3.8			1.4	10.3
Median age	13 yrs	14 yrs	13 yrs	14 yrs	13 yrs	15 yrs

Note: Youth who never used drugs are excluded. Percents may not add to 100% due to rounding.

^aMajor drugs include heroin, cocaine, LSD, and PCP.

Almost 50% of the juveniles were under the influence of either drugs or alcohol at the time of their current offense (table 13). The largest percentage of offenders under the influence of either drugs or alcohol at the time of their current offense were drug offenders (59.3%). Almost 45% of the violent and public-order offenders and nearly 50% of the property offenders were under the influence of either drugs or alcohol at the time of their offense. A higher percentage of juveniles serving time for drug possession (36.0%) were under the influence of drugs than juveniles incarcerated for any other offense.

Appendix: Comparing youth in State institutions with State prisoners

The juvenile justice system and the adult criminal justice system represent separate tracks reflecting differences in procedures, philosophies, record-keeping, dispositional alternatives, and statutory authority.⁸ Because of these differences, it is interesting to compare the types of populations for which the most stringent incarceration penalties are imposed.

In addition to the survey of juveniles and young adults in long-term, State institutions reported here, BJS has previously surveyed inmates in State prisons using similar questionnaire items and sampling procedures. The most recent prisoner survey (1986) entailed interviews with a nationally representative sample of nearly 14,000 prisoners.⁹

Prison inmates and residents of long-term, State-operated institutions were similar with respect to sex and race characteristics. While an estimated 4.4% of State prisoners were female, an estimated 6.9% of the incarcerated youth were female. An estimated 49.7% of State prison inmates were white, 46.9% black, and 3.4% other races. This compares with 53.1% of the residents of juvenile institutions who were white, 41.1% who were black, and 5.7% who were of other races.

State prisoners and young adults confined in long-term, State-operated juvenile facilities had similar offense distributions, with just over half of each group incarcerated for a violent offense (appendix table A). Juveniles, by contrast, had generally committed

⁸See Patrick A. Langan and David P. Farrington, "Two-Track or One-Track Justice? Some Evidence from an English Longitudinal Survey," *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 74 (2), Summer 1983, 519-546.

⁹See Christopher A. Innes, *Profile of State Prison Inmates, 1986*, BJS Special Report, NCJ-109928, January 1988.

Table 13. Drug and alcohol use at time of the offense by juveniles in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions, by current offense, yearend 1987

Current offense	Percent of juveniles who were				
	Not under the influence	Under the influence of:			
		Either drugs or alcohol	Drugs only	Alcohol only	Both drugs and alcohol
All offenses	52.4%	47.6%	15.7%	8.5%	23.4%
Violent offenses	55.4%	44.6%	12.1%	8.2%	24.2%
Murder*	57.5	42.5	15.2	17.3	10.0
Rape	65.8	34.2	3.6	6.2	24.5
Other sexual assault	76.7	23.3	5.9	8.1	9.3
Robbery	48.8	51.2	13.8	6.8	30.6
Assault	51.4	48.6	14.6	8.5	25.5
Property offenses	50.4%	49.6%	16.8%	9.7%	23.1%
Burglary	47.1	52.9	18.8	10.4	23.6
Larceny/theft	51.2	48.8	17.4	11.3	20.2
Motor vehicle theft	55.4	44.6	13.4	8.6	22.6
Arson	65.0	35.0	14.3	1.5	19.1
Drug offenses	40.7%	59.3%	34.4%	0%	24.9%
Possession	40.6	59.4	36.0	0	23.4
Trafficking	43.9	56.1	32.9	0	23.2
Public-order offenses	56.3%	43.7%	15.9%	7.2%	20.6%
Juvenile status offenses	50.6%	49.4%	15.3%	16.5%	17.6%

Note: Percents may not add to 100% due to rounding. Offense categories with too few cases

to provide reliable estimates are not reported. *Includes nonnegligent manslaughter.

Appendix table A. Criminal history and drug or alcohol use: A comparison of juveniles and young adults in State institutions and inmates in State prisons

Current offense	Percent of youth in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions		Percent of inmates in State prisons
	Less than 18	18 years and older	
Current offense			
Violent	39.3%	52.3%	54.6%
Property	45.6	29.0	31.0
Drug	5.6	11.3	8.6
Public-order	7.2	6.8	5.2
Other ^a	2.4	.6	.7
Prior sentences			
Probation			
Yes	82.2%	81.1%	66.0%
No	17.8	18.9	34.0
Incarceration			
Yes	58.5%	67.1%	61.9%
No	41.5	32.9	38.1
Criminal history			
Violent offenders			
Current and past violence	15.9%	24.7%	19.3%
Current violence, recidivist	17.6	17.5	22.1
Prior violence, recidivist	16.8	17.9	11.1
Current violence, first-timer	7.1	11.0	13.2
Nonviolent offenders			
Recidivists	39.2%	26.9%	29.0%
First-timers	3.3	2.0	5.3
Drug or alcohol use			
Ever used drugs	80.6%	88.2%	79.5%
Ever used any drug regularly ^b	59.7	72.3	62.3
Ever used a major drug regularly ^c	27.5	41.9	35.0
Under the influence of drugs at the time of the current offense	39.1	40.3	35.3
Under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the current offense	47.6	53.1	53.8
Number of persons confined	18,226	6,798	450,416

^aIncludes juvenile status offenses for youth in State institutions.

^bUsed once a week or more for at least a month.

^cIncludes heroin, cocaine, LSD, and PCP.

offenses that were less violent than older inmates. This difference may be partly attributable to differences in length of stay among the confined juvenile, young adult, and State prison populations. Generally, juvenile institutions may retain jurisdiction through an upper age limit of 21, but no such limit exists for State prisoners. Thus, the most serious offenders will accumulate or back up in prisons to a greater degree than in juvenile institutions.

Youth in juvenile facilities reported greater prior experience with probation than State prisoners; however, similar percentages of each group reported a prior incarceration. Backgrounds of prior violence and recidivism (defined as prior sentences to probation or incarceration) were also quite similar. About 3% of juveniles, 2% of young adults, and 5% of State prisoners were found to be nonviolent offenders serving their first sentence. The similarity in the characteristics of offenders incarcerated suggests the importance of both the seriousness of the current offense and the criminal history in determining confinement for offenders of all ages.

The extent of drug use by the three groups was also similar. However, young adults in juvenile facilities and prison inmates reported higher percentages of regular and major drug use than did juveniles. Little difference was reported by the three groups in the percentages using drugs or alcohol at the time of the offense.

Methodology

This survey of juveniles and young adults in custody was conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Most interviews were completed by yearend 1987.

The Children in Custody (CIC) census, which is conducted every 2 years, provided the universe for this study of long-term, State-operated juvenile facilities.¹⁰ The CIC census obtains aggregate information on resident characteristics such as race, sex, age, ethnicity, adjudication status, and reason held. The census also collects descriptive information on the operating agency, the extent of security and community access, the length of stay, and costs for operating the facility.

¹⁰ CIC public use data tapes are currently maintained at the Criminal Justice Archive and Information Network at the University of Michigan for the censuses conducted in 1971, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1979, 1982, and 1985.

The sample design was a stratified sample based on the size of the correctional facility. Long-term and State-operated facilities with institutional environments were included in the sampling frame. The majority of these institutions described themselves as training schools. Excluded from the survey were institutions that were locally operated, State facilities not designed for secure custody, and all short-term or privately operated facilities and institutions. (See appendix table B for comparative data on all public juvenile facilities.)

Interviews were conducted with 2,621 juveniles and young adults in 50 facilities in 26 States. The sample resulted in interviews in 1 of 4 long-term, State-operated institutions and approximately 1 in 10 residents nationwide. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and the response rate was 89%. Based on the interviews, estimates of the entire population in long-term, State-operated juvenile institutions were made. Data presented in this report are based directly on the responses of the residents.

Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Reports are written principally by BJS staff. This report was written by Allen J. Beck, Susan A. Kline, and Lawrence A. Greenfeld, corrections unit chief. Thomas Hester and Sophie Bowen provided statistical review. Frank D. Balog edited the report. Marilyn Marbrook administered report production, assisted by Christina Cunningham, Betty Sherman, Jeanne Harris, and Yvonne Shields. Data collection was carried out at the Bureau of the Census by Marilyn Monahan and Gertrude Odom under the supervision of Larry McGinn.

September 1988, NCJ-113365

The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, coordinates the activities of the following program offices and bureaus: the Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

Appendix table B. Selected characteristics of public juvenile facilities, 1985

	Long-term, State-operated, institutional facilities	All other long-term facilities ^a	Short-term facilities ^b
Number of facilities	199	360	481
Number of residents	23,823	11,548	16,031
Number of annual admissions	49,610	44,570	433,579
Average size	120	32	33
Average percent occupied	91%	81%	66%
Percent of residents who were committed	92%	89%	14%
Percent of residents who were status offenders	1%	8%	7%
^a Includes locally operated facilities with institutional or open environments and State-operated facilities with open environments.		^b Includes State or locally operated facilities with institutional or open environments.	

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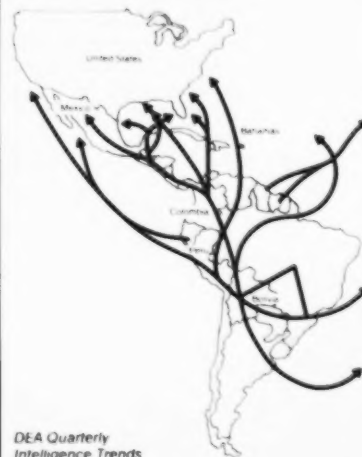
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- 1985 (final report), NCJ-104273, 5/87
- 1984 (final report), NCJ-100435, 5/86
- 1983 (final report), NCJ-96459, 10/85

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- Motor vehicle theft, NCJ-109978, 3/88
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- Preventing domestic violence against women, NCJ-102037, 8/86
- Crime prevention measures, NCJ-100438, 3/86
- The use of weapons in committing crimes, NCJ-99543, 1/86
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- Family violence, NCJ-93449, 4/84

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- Criminal victimization 1986, NCJ-106989, 10/87
- Households touched by crime, 1986, NCJ-105289, 6/87
- The crime of rape, NCJ-96777, 3/85
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